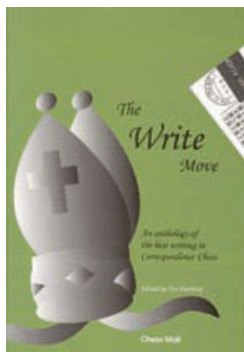




COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



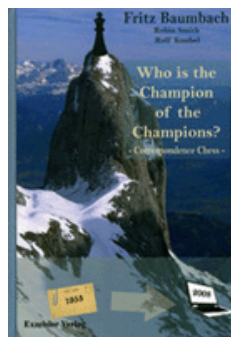
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Chess Books for Christmas

Quite a large variety of new books have come my way in recent months. Before discussing the latest Kasparov blockbuster, I will deal with others that I consider worth mentioning.

It is not every year that correspondence chess specialists have a book to interest them, so they will welcome the arrival of *Who is the Champion of the Champions?*, compiled by Fritz Baumbach (the 12th ICCF world champion), Robin Smith (twice United States Correspondence Champion), and Swiss CC-GM Rolf Knobel (Exzelsior Verlag; 224pp. Hardback; ISBN 978-3-935-80004-4). Originally conceived as the book of the Jubilee Tournament of World Champions (which began in 2001), and containing all the games of that event with notes, the concept broadened to cover some more recent events also. Many of the games in the book are annotated here for the first time, although some appeared earlier in my magazine *Chess Mail* or elsewhere.



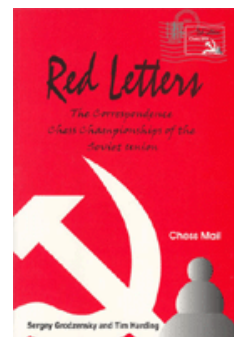
Up to the time the book went to press, twenty Correspondence Chess World Championships had been completed (and another, being played by post, is still ongoing), the first title-holder being crowned in 1953. The crosstables of all 21 events are included. Only two men have won the title twice: Tonu Õim of Estonia and Joop van Oosterom of the Netherlands. Until the 1970s a world championship final did not begin until the previous one had ended, but then they began to overlap somewhat. Moreover the Internet has meant that most tournaments have been completed much quicker than used to be the case. Due to the large number of qualifiers in recent years there has been some escalation (or devaluation) of the title and ICCF is now taking steps to reduce the frequency of world championship tournaments.

The book is mostly in English but with a small amount of German text and it includes photographs of all the champions. The book can be ordered from [www.exzelsior.de](#) or through some national correspondence chess federations.

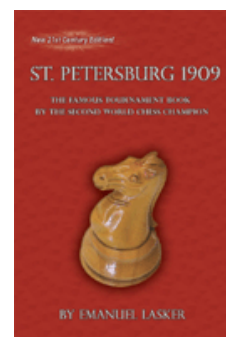
Ivar Bern (Norway) – Michel Lecroq (France)
 Correspondence World Championship 17 Final, 2002
 King's Indian Defence [E99]

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5
 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 Rc1 Ng6 14 c5 Nxc5 15
 b4 Na6 16 Nd3 h5 17 Nb5 Bd7 18 a4 Bh6 19 Rc3**

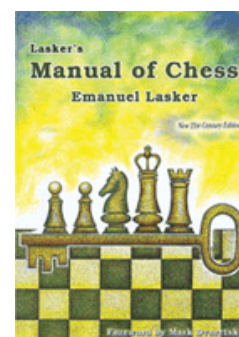
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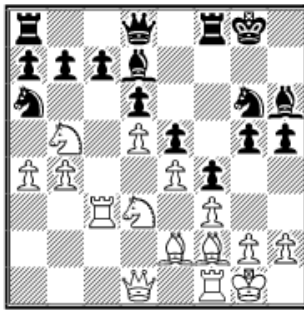
[Red Letters](#)
 by Sergey Grodzinsky
 & Tim Harding



[St. Petersburg 1909](#)
 by Emanuel Lasker



[Lasker's Manual of Chess](#)
 by Emanuel Lasker



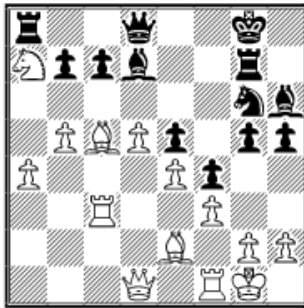
19...Rf7

Better is 19...b6 20 Be1 Rf7 21 Nf2 Bc8! (21...Nh4 22 Nxd6 cxd6 23 Bxa6 Qe8 24 Qe2+/- Piket-Kasparov, Linares 1997) 22 Ra3 Nxb4! 23 Bxb4 a6 24 Nxd6 cxd6= Bern-Stern, 17th Wch corr.

20 Nxa7 Rg7 21 b5!!N

Offering a positional piece sacrifice, as shown in the next note; Black dared not accept it. The old move was 21 Nb5 (Korchnoi-Ivanov, Enghien-les-Bains 1997).

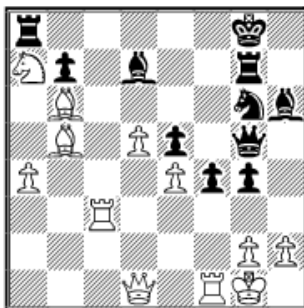
21...Nc5 22 Nxc5 dxc5 23 Bxc5!



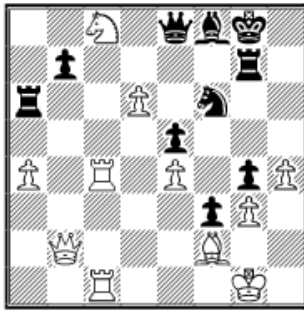
23...g4

Black tries to obtain some counterplay. The main point of 21 b5 is seen in the endgame arising from 23...b6 24 Nc6 Bxc6 25 dxc6 Qxd1 26 Rxd1 bxc5 27 Ra3. Although Black has an extra piece in exchange for only one pawn, his conglomeration of kingside pieces cannot reach the queenside in time to stop a decisive advance of White's pawn majority. For example, 27...Ra5 28 Bc4+ Kh7 29 Rd7 Nf8 30 Rad3!! (threatening b5-b6; Bern's notes in the book stop here.) 30...Rxa4 (30...Ra8 31 Rxg7+ Kxg7 32 a5 Rc8 33 Bd5 threatening b5-b6, and if 33...c4 34 Ra3; 30...Nxd7 31 cxd7 Rxd7 32 Rxd7+ Kg6 33 Bb3 c4 34 Bc2) 31 Rxg7+ Bxg7 32 b6 cxb6 33 c7 Rxc4 34 c8Q and although Black has the nominal material equivalent of the queen, his position is clearly hopeless.

24 fxg4 Qg5 25 b6 cxb6 26 Bxb6 hxg4 27 Bb5!



27...f3 28 Bxd7 Rxd7 29 g3 Nf8 30 h4 Qg6 31 Qb1 Nh7 32 Nc8 Nf6 33 Rc4 Qe8 34 Qc2 Bf8 35 Bf2 Rg7 36 Rc1 Qg6 37 d6 Qe8 38 Qb2 Ra6



39 Rc7! Rxc7 40 dxc7! Qxc8 41 Qxe5 Bg7 42 Qe7 Ne8 43 Qd8 Ra8 44 Qd5+ Kh8 45 Rc5 1-0

Black resigns; he stopped the passed pawn, but succumbs to a mating attack (Qf7 and Rh5).

Capablanca in the United Kingdom (1911-1920) by Vlastimil Fiala
(Moravian Chess; 379pp. Hardback; ISBN 978-80-7189-569-5)

This book documents the four visits the Cuban champion paid to Britain prior to becoming World Champion in 1921. (A second volume, dealing with his visits in 1922-39, is in preparation.) In 1911, the first time he came, he was actually in London twice, but on the first occasion he was only passing through on his way to the tournament in San Sebastian, Spain, and only played a few casual games during that brief stay. He returned to London in November, when he gave two exhibitions, and also one in Birmingham. In 1913 he also paid a small visit, giving two simultaneous displays.

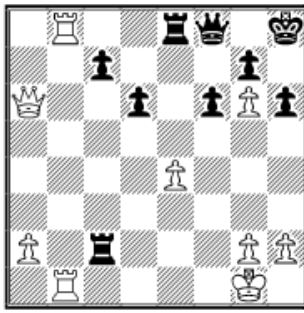


The majority of the book deals with Capablanca's visits in 1919 and 1920, of which the former was an extensive tour. As well as winning the Hastings Victory Congress, he travelled around giving simultaneous displays, visiting cities in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, as well as England. Finally in 1920 Capablanca came to England again and gave more exhibitions.

The author has compiled this book from research into the contemporary chess columns and the two English magazines published at that time: *British Chess Magazine* and the *Chess Amateur*. The volume includes all the games he could find, many never republished until now, and also quotes from text reports about the Cuban's activities. All Capablanca's games and round-by-round scores from Hastings 1919 are included, the notorious finish of the game with Sir George Thomas being examined on pages 132-3.

Jose R. Capablanca – Sir George Thomas
Hastings Victory Congress (rd. 4), 1919
Spanish [C66]

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 d6 4 Nc3 Nf6 5 d4 Be7 6 0-0 Bd7 7 Re1 Nxd4 8 Nxd4 exd4 9 Qxd4 Bxb5 10 Nxb5 a6 11 Nc3 0-0 12 Bg5 Nd7 13 Bxe7 Qxe7 14 Nd5 Qd8 15 Re3 Ne5 16 Rg3 f6 17 f4 Nc6 18 Qc3 Rf7 19 f5 Qf8 20 Qb3 Kh8 21 Nf4 Ne5 22 Qxb7 Rb8 23 Qxa6 Rxb2 24 Rb3 Rxc2 25 Rab1 h6 26 Ng6+ Nxg6 27 fxg6 Re7 28 Rb8 Re8



29 Qa8?! 1-0!?

This is a classic case of unwarranted resignation. “When the Cuban made his last move he did so with an air of finality that gave the impression that the game was practically decided and Sir Thomas [sic] was under the same impression, so hopeless matters did look on the surface”. (*American Chess Bulletin*, 1919, p. 206, quoted in Fiala, Capablanca in the UK, p. 133).

However, the defence 29...Rxa2! was quickly pointed out (by Blackburne, Atkins and others), when Black has at least (but probably no more than) a draw. Capablanca was winning before his last move and no doubt Thomas was mentally resigned to his fate and so failed to spot his unexpected opportunity. The book gives 29 Rxe8 (pointed out by Amos Burn in *The Field*) 29...Qxe8 30 Qa4! winning material, e.g. 30...Rxc2+ (30...Rc1+ 31 Kf2) 31 Kxg2 Qxc2 32 Kh1 Qg4 33 Qc2 and eventually winning, as there is only one more check.

Actually 29 Qb5! (not mentioned in the book or any other comments I have seen, contemporary or otherwise) seems to be the strongest move. Now the back rank mate threats cost Black a whole rook without any swindling chances: 29...Rxb8 30 Qxb8 Rc1+ (30...Kg8 31 Qb3+) 31 Kf2 Rc2+ 32 Kf1 Rc1+ 33 Ke2 Rc2+ 34 Kd3.

The games in the Fiala book were mostly played in simuls and consultation games. Because local chess columnists tended to publish games, and so preserve, where their neighbours were successful, the book perhaps contains a disproportionate number of games drawn or lost by Capablanca. Usually it seems that Capablanca eschewed gambits and ground down his opponents with safe openings. The following game involving Andrew Bonar Law (who was Conservative Party leader from 1911-21 and British prime minister for less than a year in 1922-3) may be of wider interest and it featured a more lively opening.

J. R. Capablanca – Bonar Law + 2 other MPs

London consultation game, 29 December 1919

Ponziani Opening [C44]

Notes not credited to me are as in *The Observer*, 1 February 1920, quoted in Fiala's book, pp. 354-5. The two MPs in consultation with Bonar Law were not named.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 c3 d5 4 Qa4 dxe4

TH: This move is considered passive; 4...f6 is the main line. 4...Nf6 and 4...Bd7 are gambit replies, the former being more interesting. The other possibility is to defend the e-pawn by 4...Qd6!?

5 Nxe5 Qd5 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 Bc4 Qd7 8 d3 exd3 9 0-0 Bd6 10 Bg5

10 Nd2 was played in Ljubojevic- Karpov, Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975, where White obtained the advantage, although it was a short draw.

10...Ne7 11 Nd2 0-0 12 Bxd3 f6 13 Qc4+ Kh8 14 Be3 a5 15 Bc2 Nf5

Giving up a pawn for the attack, which looks promising. If 15...Ba6 16 Qh4 with advantage.

16 Bxf5

TH: After 16 Rfe1 Nxe3 (16...Ba6 17 Qg4) 17 Rxe3 Bxh2+ 18 Kxh2 Qxd2 19 Qd3 Qxd3 20 Bxd3, White may have an edge due to his lead in development; Black's extra pawn is practically worthless. Capablanca's choice is more ambitious but a bit riskier.

16...Qxf5 17 Qxc6 Ba6 18 Rfe1 Rfb8 19 Ne4 Be5

19...Bxh2+ is unsound, because of 20 Kxh2 Bb7 21 Ng3!.

20 Nc5 Bb5 21 Qf3 Qxf3 22 gxf3 Bc6 23 f4 Bd6 24 b3 Rb5?!

TH: Aggressive but artificial. White's extra material is only a doubled isolated pawn and Black has the bishop-pair. The straightforward 24...Re8 (threatening ...Rxe3) 25 Nd3 Kg8 seems to give some compensation (but if 25...Rad8 26 Bc5 or 26 Nb2 Bb5 27 c4 White gradually relieves the pressure).

25 Ne6 Rh5 26 c4 Rh4



27 c5!

An excellent move, giving up the exchange, but getting a full equivalent in his pawn position on the queenside.

27...Rg4+ 28 Kf1 Bb5+ 29 Re2 Bxe2+ 30 Kxe2 Be7 31 Nxc7 Rc8 32 Nd5 Bd8

32...Bxc5 would of course be answered by 33 Rc1.

33 Rc1 Rh4 34 c6 Rh5 35 Rc5 Bc7 36 a4 Rxh2?

This loses the a-pawn and leads to a quick finish. 36...h6 would make it very difficult for White to win. (TH: White would probably have to trade c-pawn for a-pawn and give up his own h-pawn, but the connected passed pawns on the queenside still give winning chances.)

37 Nxc7 Rxc7 38 Rxa5 h5 39 Rc5 g6 40 b4 Rh1 41 b5 Rb1 42 a5 h4 43 b6 Rxc6 44 Rxc6 h3 45 a6 h2 46 a7 1-0 Resigns, for if 46...h1Q White mates in three by 47 a8Q+ Kg7 48 Rc7+ Kh6 49 Qh8. A most interesting and well-played game by both sides.

The book is occasionally marred by textual errors, as I found when looking up the account of the visit to Dublin in December 1919, as the result of an invitation from 'one of the Irish members of the House of Lords, Sir Horace Plunkett *[sic]*...' Elsewhere his surname is correctly spelled, and as his title shows, Plunkett was not a peer himself (he was the younger son of a peer), but a member of the House of Commons. Some of the contemporary articles quoted in the text contain blatant errors of fact, and it would have been helpful if Fiala had descended from Olympus long

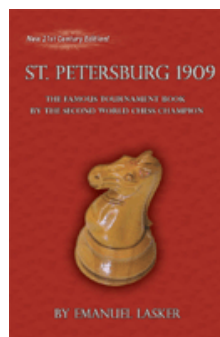
enough to point these out, at least in footnotes.

For example, there is a lengthy article quoted from the *Daily Express and Irish Daily Mail* of Thursday 4 December 1919, which includes the statement (see p. 228) that 'In 1853 Paul Morphy visited Dublin, and, playing blindfolded defeated five of the best players in Ireland simultaneously'. Of course Morphy never visited the land of his ancestors, and only played against one Irishman. It was not in 1853 but in August 1858 that he conducted his simultaneous in Birmingham where one of his opponents was indeed George Salmon, later provost of Trinity College Dublin.

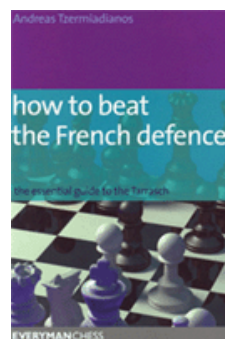
Despite such minor flaws, this book will interest those who welcome the detailed and systematic research that is being done nowadays into the lives and careers of the great players, rather than the casual hagiographies which used to be all that was available.

Some Short Reports

Before moving on to the main review in this column, here are some short reports on other publications. I was invited by Hanon Russell to write the foreword to his new edition of [*St. Petersburg 1909*](#) by Emanuel Lasker, which includes all 175 games from the event. So far as I am aware, this is the first time this book has been made available in English in algebraic notation (Russell Enterprises; ISBN 978-1-888690-46-0; 190pp. Softcover; US \$19.95). The same publisher has produced a new edition of [*Lasker's Manual of Chess*](#) (Russell Enterprises; ISBN 978-1-888690-50-7; 277pp. soft-cover; US\$ 29.95). The edition includes several photographs, a foreword by GM Mark Dvoretsky and a preface by editor Taylor Kingston. I would say this book is chiefly for players sub-1800 rating who do not have this classic in their libraries already. Every year Hanon Russell also produces an [*International Chess Calendar*](#) which, among other things, indicates what masters were born or died on the various dates, plus a few short articles and photographs each month. The 2009 calendar is now out. Finally, also from Russell Enterprises, there is a new book, *Dvoretsky's Analytical Manual*, which I need time to digest. This will be reviewed along with other books in one of my columns next spring.



[*How to beat the French defence: the essential guide to the Tarrasch*](#) is the ambitious title of a new book from Greek IM Andreas Tzermiadianos (Everyman Chess; 320pp. Softcover; ISBN 978-1-85744-567-1; US\$25.95, UK £15.99). The Tarrasch, 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2, was always the favourite of Anatoly Karpov



who converted what used to be seen as a fairly innocuous evasion of the Winawer 'main' lines into a deadly positional weapon which only Viktor Korchnoi seemed to be able to counter in the 1970s. Most Everyman chess opening books take an illustrative game approach, in which some important sub-variations can get sidelined if there is no appropriate game. Moreover such works are often a-historical, giving attention almost exclusive to lines played in recent years. This book does have several illustrative games, but it is good to see that in this substantial work the author has adopted the more thematic approach that used to be employed by Batsford openings authors in the heyday of that series, ensuring that all lines get explained and covered. Tzermiadianos has not neglected to check correspondence chess databases where critical sidelines often get tested, so overall this looks like an essential work for anyone who plays the French with black or as white either employs the Tarrasch or is thinking

of switching to it from 3 Nc3 or 3 e5.



The 'Dangerous Weapons' series does not aim to be encyclopaedic in its approach, but each volume looks at some ideas that may be 'under the radar' of many players and can surprise opponents. The latest in the series, *Dangerous Weapons: Flank Openings* by Richard Palliser, Tony Kosten, and James Vigus (Everyman Chess; 253pp. Softcover; ISBN 978-1-85744-583-1; US \$24.95, UK £14.99) deals with lines from the English Opening, Reti, and Bird's Opening. I was impressed to see it included two lines with which I had some success, 1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 e4 and 1

c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e4, although my way of playing the latter was somewhat different from what they advocate. The authors also suggest lines in the English against 1...c5 and 1...c6, so this book will be particularly useful for players who employ that opening at a medium level, say about 1600-2300.

Kasparov's Latest Opus

Garry Kasparov on Modern Chess, Part Two: Kasparov vs. Karpov 1975-1985 (Everyman Chess, US \$45, UK £30; 424pp. Hardback; ISBN 978-1-85744-433-9).

Controversy will probably always surround the events in Moscow on 15 February 1985 when FIDE President Florencio Campomanes halted the first world championship match between Karpov and Kasparov. Following the 48th game of the 'unlimited' match, to be won by the first player to win six games, Kasparov had reduced the reigning champion's lead to 5-3. For a long time it had been 4-0 and even 5-0. Most people probably accept that the match was stopped by Campomanes (a notorious crony of the disgraced Filipino president Ferdinand Marcos), under pressure or persuasion from the Soviet Chess Federation. Like Marcos, Campomanes was hardly an individual of high moral character, unlike his predecessors in the FIDE President, Max Euwe and Fridrik Olafsson; such an event would have been unthinkable in their time. With Campomanes, the Soviets had obtained a tool they could manipulate; he was also a convenient scapegoat when the termination decision became generally unpopular.



The open questions are, firstly, why, and by whom specifically, was that pressure created? Was it V.I. Sevastyanov, president of the Soviet federation, or did the word come from higher up? Secondly, what was Karpov's role in the stopping of the match? And thirdly, who really benefited from this decision: Karpov, Kasparov, neither, or both of them? Ostensibly, the major beneficiary was Kasparov. Despite winning two games in succession, he still had the Sword of Damocles hanging over him. Karpov only had to rally in the next game, where he was due to play white, and with a win he would retain his title and pitch Kasparov back into the new Candidates match cycle. Thanks to Campomanes, Kasparov got a second shot at the title, in a best-of-24 game match six months later, starting at 0-0; his deficit was wiped out, and he could (and did) use all the experience he had gained from the match to launch a new challenge.

Karpov, on the other hand, gained nothing. He had originally been crowned World Champion without having to play a match in 1975; now another FIDE decision kept him on the throne, but hardly enhanced his personal reputation. Again he was seen in the West as a lackey of the Brezhnev regime in the Kremlin. Chess players worldwide were losing whatever respect they had for him as a man and as a player. The only

thing that could have changed this was for him to soldier on and try to change his fate, as he had done against Korchnoi in Baguio in 1978, when a 5-2 lead became 5-5, but he managed to win the next game.

In his new book, which includes all games between the two Ks to the end of 1985 (another volume will discuss their subsequent matches), Kasparov repeats his view of the match and its termination which he had already expressed in the early autobiography *Child of Change*. He clearly believes that Karpov had been consulted about a possible stopping of the match, and had agreed to it, but perhaps not in the terms that Campomanes announced. (Did he seriously expect to be allowed to start a new match at 2-0?) On page 233, Kasparov's notes to the opening of the 48th game say 'Karpov's objective was merely to hold out (after all it would be far more convenient to terminate the match with a score of 5-2, rather than 5-3).' Kasparov believes, perhaps rightly, that some pretext would have been found to prevent the re-match had there not been a change of leadership in the Kremlin, but he cannot prove this; after all it was his own behaviour in giving interviews that created a possible pretext for disqualifying him.

Both players in fact claim they wanted the match to continue, although Kasparov clearly doubts Karpov's sincerity. On page 257 he quotes Karpov saying to Averbakh (right after Campomanes's announcement of the termination) that 'We agreed on something quite different!' Is that true? And if so, what was the 'something quite different' that Karpov expected to be announced? *British Chess Magazine* editor Bernard Cafferty (April 1985), describing the 'chaotic' press conference where Campomanes announced his decision, observed that the 'extensive nature of the ad-libbing' showed that 'some of the *dramatis personae* had not learned their lines, or changed their minds as matters developed'.

More recently, Edward Winter has been very critical of Kasparov's account. See his article '[The Termination](#)' and other articles that can be found by searching the Chess Notes website. Mr. Winter has given me permission to quote him in the present article. He says that Kasparov had the choice with this new book between two approaches:

Option A: a careful narrative founded on intellectual rigour and, as far as possible, documented sources;

Option B: a cut-and-paste treatment based on his earlier unreliable accounts.

'It is Option B all the way,' observes Mr. Winter, and I have to agree. (However, I am not taking sides on Winter's campaign against Raymond Keene, which is a persistent thread in much of Winter's writing. I have no personal knowledge of what transpired in 1985 and have not attempted to deconstruct everything that has been written on this affair.) Winter's article, since modified (as the webpage clearly indicates) was originally written in 1988 just as the chess world was beginning to come around to the point of view that Campomanes's intervention had not necessarily prevented Kasparov's imminent victory over a physically and mentally shattered Karpov.

However, the view, supposedly held in the spring of 1985 that Campomanes had saved Karpov from inevitable defeat, was not universally held in my opinion. As Winter has pointed out, Kasparov sometimes says he had maybe a 30% chance of victory if the match had continued without delay, so can hardly consistently claim both that he was 'robbed' and that his opponent still had a much better chance of winning one game than he had of winning three. I looked at some contemporary western accounts soon after the match termination. For example, grandmaster Jan Timman wrote in *New in Chess* (April 1985) was sceptical of the view that Karpov was so ill that he had to be 'saved' by terminating the match. Timman wrote: 'Admittedly there was a realistic chance that Kasparov would bring the score to 5-4. Then,

however, a new instinct would have undoubtedly awakened in Karpov, that of alertness’.

This informed opinion from a leading grandmaster, who often played with both the Ks, is rarely quoted, whereas Kasparov (see p. 247) quotes Botvinnik as if he were stating fact. Botvinnik’s prediction (after Game 48, but before the actual stopping of the match) that it would be stopped was based on his view that it was more likely that Kasparov would win three more games than that Karpov would win one. The former world champion’s view of Soviet chess politics may have been well-informed, but he was hardly the best person to judge what would happen at the board, having retired from serious play in 1970.

It seems clear that neither player was fully consulted in advance, but that Karpov had a better idea of what was going to happen than Kasparov. The other area that might reflect badly on Kasparov is that he had dealings with the deputy arbiter Kinzel in which he apparently raised the question of the match being halted. If we accept Kasparov’s view: that was in the context that he was concerned ‘medical advice’ might be sued to postpone the continuation for a long enough period (say a month) to allow Karpov to recuperate and do new preparation. That would wipe out Kasparov’s ‘advantage’ and make it very likely that Karpov would win the match. By stepping in as he did, Campomanes perhaps ‘saved’ Kasparov. Moreover, Kasparov clearly benefited considerably from starting the new match at 0-0. The only advantages Karpov had in the second match were that he would remain world champion in the event of a tie, and that he would have a return match if he lost. As Winter says, without availability of all documents from the Soviet Chess Federation, FIDE, and Campomanes, it is hard to arrive at definite conclusions. The contradictory statements various participants have made do not help, while others (e.g. Gligoric, the chief arbiter) have kept silent.

It is hard to know how much of the composition of this book is due to cut-and-paste by the Russian chess journalist Dmitry Plisetsky, who, Kibitzer readers may recall, was probably responsible for many of the historical errors about nineteenth century chess that mar the first volume of Kasparov’s *My Great Predecessors* series. He has probably had an important role as compiler in all Kasparov’s late books, but is not named in the next or on the colophon page as a co-author. He has in fact been relegated to ghost-writer. Fortunately the publisher gives the game away on the inside back fly-leaf of the dust jacket which clearly states that Kasparov wrote this book “together with... Plisetsky”.

It would seem that Kasparov’s previous Russian book on the matches and his *Child of Change* autobiography (written in conjunction with Donald Trelford) provided most of the material on the match, but with Kasparov stepping in here and there to provide new material, chiefly in the form of analytical correctives to the annotations as discovered by the latest powerful computers at his disposal. The latter is in fact the one and only good reason why many players may wish to buy this book. Now that Kasparov has retired from competition, he does not have to hide his ideas and the advance in computing means that he can correct the many misleading judgments in his earlier annotations. Of course this leaves it open that in five years, when computing has advanced still further, he may find that moves which he praised ten years ago and now condemns may have been the best after all, but that is a fate all technical chess writers have to live with. On the other hand, Kasparov should not feel he owes the chess world (and his bank account) a new book annually, especially if like this one it is mostly recycled from his previous works. Maybe it would be better if he put his efforts into reviving his campaign for real democracy in Russia, but they tell me he has backed the wrong horse there too.

Postscript

At the deadline for last month’s column, it was still unclear what would

be decided about the “candidates final” match Topalov vs. Kamsky, originally scheduled to start in late November 2008. It has now been scheduled to take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in February. For more details see the news pages of the FIDE and ChessBase websites, and other major chess sites.

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